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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 000810

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2013

TAGS: MOPS MARR MARR IT ITMOPS FORCES IN ITALY IRAQI FREEDOM

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF ITALY HAS HANDLE ON TRAINSTOPPING

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REF: A. MILAN 0133
B. ROME 5358

CLASSIFIED BY: A/POL-MIN COUNSELOR GARY ROBBINS FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. THE GOI, WORKING WITH THE U.S. MILITARY AND THE EMBASSY, HAS PREVENTED ANTI-WAR PROTESTERS FROM STOPPING TRAINS MOVING U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN TASK FORCE (SETAF) TO CAMP DARBY. PROTEST ACTIVITY IS SPREADING, BUT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (MOI) HAS IMPLEMENTED A GOOD SECURITY PLAN TO ENSURE THE SAFE PASSAGE OF ONE REMAINING TRAIN, SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE AT CAMP DARBY ON FEBRUARY 27. THE GOI HAS MADE CLEAR ITS INTENT TO DEPLOY ALL MEANS NECESSARY--INCLUDING THE USE OF FORCE AGAINST THOSE BREAKING THE LAW--TO COUNTER THE "TRAINSTOPPING" ACTIVISTS. IN THE EVENT THREATENED DOCKWORKER STRIKES MATERIALIZE AT LIVORNO, A COMMERCIAL PORT NEAR DARBY, U.S. MILITARY OFFICIALS BELIEVE THEY SHOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH EVENTUAL LOADING OF EQUIPMENT ON SHIPS BOUND FOR SW ASIA. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) PROTESTS IN NORTHERN AND CENTRAL ITALY (REF A) TARGETING ITALIAN CIVILIAN TRAINS MOVING U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE U.S. ARMY'S SOUTHERN EUROPEAN TASK FORCE (SETAF) IN VICENZA TO CAMP DARBY (LIVORNO) HAVE DISRUPTED, BUT NOT STOPPED DELIVERIES. SETAF HAS STRICTLY FOLLOWED NOTIFICATION CHAINS AND IS WORKING INTENSIVELY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS TO ENSURE SAFE AND TIMELY MOVEMENT OF THE TRAINS, WHICH ARE TRAVELING WITH U.S. SERVICEMEN AND ITALIAN CARABINIERI ABOARD. ODC ROME IS COORDINATING CLOSELY

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WITH THE MOI ON STRATEGY.

¶3. (C) THE MOI'S DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SECURITY HAS SET UP A CRISIS CENTER TO MONITOR EVENTS AND WORK TACTICS TOGETHER WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE NATIONAL RAILROAD (FERROVIE DI STATO). A SYSTEM OF COUNTERMEASURES HAS BEEN ACTIVATED WHICH INCLUDES HEAVY SURVEILLANCE OF THE PROTESTER'S COMMUNICATIONS, DEPLOYMENT OF HUNDREDS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AT KEY POINTS ALONG TRAIN ROUTES, AND MOVING EQUIPMENT BY NIGHT. THE GOI, BY PLAYING A CAT AND MOUSE GAME WITH THE TRAINS--OFTEN SHIFTING ROUTES ON SHORT NOTICE--HAS BEEN ABLE KEEP THE PROTESTERS OFF BALANCE.

¶4. (SBU) POLICE OUTFITTED WITH ANTI-RIOT GEAR HAVE REMOVED ACTIVISTS FROM THE TRACKS, BUT VIOLENT CLASHES WITH PROTESTERS HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. INTERIOR MINISTER PISANU SAID ON FEBRUARY 25 THAT THE GOI IS FOCUSING ON PREVENTIVE MEASURES, BUT IS WILLING TO USE THE REPRESSIVE POWERS OF THE STATE TO COMBAT ILLEGAL ACTIVITY, IF NECESSARY. ACTIVISTS BLOCKING CIVILIAN TRAIN LINES ARE SUBJECT TO ADMINISTRATIVE FINES OF UP TO 10,000 EUROS, BUT COULD ALSO BE ACCUSED OF "PROHIBITING A PUBLIC SERVICE," WHICH IS PUNISHABLE BY UP TO ONE YEAR IN PRISON. BLOCKING THE MOVEMENT OF A "MILITARY TRAIN" IS A FELONY FOR WHICH A PERPETRATOR, IF FOUND GUILTY, WOULD FACE A MINIMUM OF EIGHT YEARS IN PRISON. DURING THE "TRAINSTOPPINGS" THAT BEGAN ON FEBRUARY 21, NO ACTIVIST HAS YET BEEN CHARGED WITH COMMITTING AN ILLEGAL ACT.

¶5. (C) ON FEBRUARY 25, SETAF, AFTER CONSULTING WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES, DECIDED TO DELAY THE LOADING OF

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TWO TRAINS THAT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 26. ODC ROME SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED MOI ABOUT THE DELAY. SETAF MADE THE DECISION AFTER BEING APPRISED THAT A LARGE DEMONSTRATION AT THE GRISIGNANO DI ZOCCHI STATION (NEAR VICENZA) WAS LIKELY AT THE SAME TIME LOADING WAS TO HAVE BEGUN (NOTE: THE DEMONSTRATION CONSISTING OF SOME TWO-HUNDRED ACTIVISTS UNFOLDED AS EXPECTED). MOREOVER, A "NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION" TO INCLUDE WIDESPREAD SIT-INS ON TRACKS THROUGHOUT NORTHERN ITALY IS BEING STAGED WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 BY THE SOCIAL FORUM, A COALITION OF "NO GLOBAL" GROUPS, AND THE "DISOBEDIENTS" (REF B). THE TWO TRAINS WILL NOW BE MERGED INTO ONE LONGER TRAIN AND LOADED AT 2100 ON FEBRUARY 26. ITS ARRIVAL AT CAMP DARBY ON FEBRUARY 27 WOULD COMPLETE THE CURRENT PRE-POSITIONING OF EQUIPMENT.

¶6. (C) NO DATE HAS BEEN SET YET FOR LOADING OF THE PRE-POSITIONED EQUIPMENT ONTO SHIPS FOR ONWARD TRANSPORT TO

SW ASIA. POSSIBLE DOCKWORKER STRIKES BY ITALY'S LARGEST TRADE UNION (CGIL), WHICH DOMINATES ITS COMPETITION IN THE SECTOR, SHOULD NOT POSE A PROBLEM AS ROLL-ON/ROLL-OFF VESSELS WILL BE USED TO LOAD THE EQUIPMENT AT THE PORT OF LIVORNO, REQUIRING ONLY MINIMAL LONGSHOREMAN-TYPE ASSISTANCE. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO CLARIFY WITH UNION OFFICIALS WHETHER THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO ACTIVELY PREVENT

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INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-01
	G-00	SAS-00	/004W				

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8474
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL MILAN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL NAPLES IMMEDIATE
HQ EUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
CDR USASSETAF VICENZA IT IMMEDIATE
CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE IMMEDIATE

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LOADING OPERATIONS OR SIMPLY STRIKE TO AVOID PARTICIPATING.

7 (SBU) ALSO ON FEBRUARY 26, FIVE LEFT-WING PARLIAMENTARIANS CONDUCTED A "PARLIAMENTARY INVESTIGATION" OF CAMP DARBY, PERMITTED BY ITALIAN LAW. THE PARLIAMENTARIANS, WHO HAVE THE LEGAL RIGHT TO BRING INVITED GUESTS, WERE ACCCOMPANIED BY SOCIAL FORUM LEADER VITTORIO AGNOLETO, A JOURNALIST AFFILIATED WITH THE HARD-LEFT COMMUNIST RENEWAL PARTY, AND AN ASSISTANT TO A GREEN PARTY MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DEPUTIES. THE GROUP WAS GIVEN A BRIEF TOUR OF THE BASE BY THE ITALIAN BASE COMMANDER, COLONEL VENUTI, WHO WAS ACCCOMPANIED BY U.S. ARMY COLONEL CARROLL, THE SETAF-BASED AREA SUPPORT GROUP COMMANDER.

18. (C) COMMENT. THE GOI HAS BEEN ABLE TO OVERCOME AN INITIAL HICCUP IN ITS INTERAGENCY PROCESS (NOTE: CGIL SECRETARY GENERAL EPIFANI WAS THE FIRST TO INFORM THE PRIME

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MINISTER'S OFFICE ABOUT THE PROTESTS THAT BEGAN ON FEBRUARY 21) AND IS RESPONDING ABLY TO COUNTER THE TRAINSTOPPERS. SETAF REPORTS THAT THEY ARE VERY PLEASED WITH THE COOPERATION THEY HAVE RECEIVED FROM ITALIAN AUTHORITIES AND THE PROFESSIONALISM OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS CHARGED WITH ENSURING THE SAFE PASSAGE OF TRAINS TO CAMP DARBY. END COMMENT.

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